

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **WHERE WE NEED TO BE GOING – RECENT CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY**

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(Revised 2-14-03)

Since the preparation and adoption of the Town's Comprehensive Plan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Ogunquit has continued to grow and to change. While the 1980s was a decade of reasonable stability in Ogunquit, the 1990s was a period of growth and significant change in the community. During the 90s, Ogunquit experienced significant growth in its year-round population (a 26% increase) and a considerable amount of residential development including a number of residential subdivisions. The population of the community in the 55 to 74-year-old group increased by more than 75% fueled by the in-migration of pre-retirees and young retirees while the population less than 25 years old decreased by almost 10%.

Ogunquit's role as a summer tourist destination grew significantly during the 1990s. Over this period, the number of overnight visitors increased as the number of rooms in motels, inns, and bed and breakfasts increased as existing establishments expanded and new establishments were created. The strong regional and national economies brought a larger number of day-trippers to the Town's beaches and other attractions. More overnight visitors combined with more day-trippers have stretched the capacity of the community to be a gracious host and to maintain the quality of life for both the resident and the visitor. And possibly most important, the length of the tourist season has gradually increased so that Ogunquit is now a tourist destination almost six months of the year. As a result, the impact on the community's residents lasts longer and longer each year.

The growing year-round population combined with the growth in seasonal visitors has created additional traffic that taxes the community's street system and parking facilities during the summer. Open space continues to be lost as residential development continues especially in the area between Route One and the Maine Turnpike. Both contribute to a perceived change in Ogunquit's quality of life.

In the community survey conducted as part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan, concerns about traffic emerged as the number one issue facing the community. Other key issues identified in the community survey include concerns about commercial over-development and its impact on the community, the amount of residential development, and parking.

In many ways, respondents to the community survey and participants in the community visioning session expressed a concern that Ogunquit is in danger of losing its "small town character" as it is overwhelmed by increasing levels of

tourism. Maintaining or re-establishing this balance between the livability of Ogunquit for its year-round and seasonal residents and its role as a tourist destination is the principal challenge facing the community in the future. This update of the Comprehensive Plan hopes to address how that balance between the two roles of Ogunquit can be achieved.